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Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman Supplemental Appropriations Act (H.R. 3289) October 16, 2003

Mr. Chairman, the Bush Administration has made it impossible for me and others to do what we otherwise would want to do. Under normal circumstances, I would support the President's request for \$87 billion in additional spending for Iraq and Afghanistan. But I can't do that today.

The Bush Administration's Iraq policy has been grounded in secrecy, deceit, and politics. Some suspected that a year ago; I refused to believe it. But now it is inescapable.

The intolerable reality is that they blatantly twisted intelligence information to fit preconceived policies. They lied to promote public relations—from the Jessica Lynch ordeal to the President's campaign landing on the U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln—and about what the war would cost our country.

And through all of it, they have refused to answer questions, provide honest information, or accept any oversight or accountability for their actions. It is an abysmal—and at times inexcusable—record.

I voted for the Iraq Resolution last year. I relied on the President's representations about the imminent threat Iraq posed to the United States. And I relied on the statements other senior Administration officials—including the Vice President—made regarding Iraq's nuclear capability.

I won't make that same mistake again. They have squandered their credibility and the normal deference we give to any Administration, Republican or Democratic.

I say all this knowing full well we must finish what we started in Iraq. I feel that as strongly as any member of the House. As one who voted for last year's Resolution, I feel a responsibility to make sure we honor the sacrifice so many have already made by achieving a democratic and safe Iraq. I feel a special obligation to our troops and to make sure they have everything they need to be as safe and effective as possible.

But before I agree to the President's request, I want to be confident that those running the war

are doing their job and that the reconstruction effort is effective, not wasteful spending.

Some say the easy political vote is to support the President's request and defend it by saying we are supporting the troops. But if we really want to support the troops, we'll first make sure that the people running the war know what they're doing. No American soldier should die because of mistakes up the line. And we'll make sure that the Bush Administration puts aside stubbornness and makes the world community a serious and active part of this process.

Then we could vote for the President's request in good conscience.

Mr. Chairman, the Bush Administration has made a series of terrible mistakes in formulating its Iraq policy. But even in the face of those mistakes, the Administration insists on going it alone. No help from other countries, no oversight by Congress, and no accountability to the American people.

That will never change if we give them an automatic yes vote on today's bill. Instead, voting yes will encourage them to continue the policies that don't work and tactics that deserve condemnation. Our troops deserve better than that.

We should oppose the President's request until this Administration demonstrates that it puts our troops before politics and honesty before pride.